

Section 73.682 is amended by revising paragraphs (a)(22)(i) and (a)(24)(iii)(A) to read as follows:

Section 73.682 TV transmission standards.

(a) \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*

(22)(i) Line 21, in each field, may be used for the transmission of a program-related data signal which, when decoded, provides a visual depiction of information simultaneously being presented on the aural channel (captions). Line 21, field 2 may be used for transmission of a program-related data signal which, when decoded, identifies a rating level associated with the current program. Such data signals shall conform to the format described in figure 17 of § 73.699 and may be transmitted during all periods of regular operation. On a space available basis, line 21 field 2 may also be used for text-mode data and extended data service information.

\* \* \* \* \*

(24)(iii)(A) The use of such signals shall not result in significant degradation to any portion of the visual, aural, or program-related data signals of the television broadcast station;

## **SEPARATE STATEMENT OF COMMISSIONER GLORIA TRISTANI**

*In the Matter of Implementation of Section 551 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, Video Programming Ratings, CS Docket No. 97-55, and In the Matter of Technical Requirements to Enable Blocking of Video Programming Based on Program Ratings, Implementation of Sections 551(c), (d) and (e) of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, ET Docket No. 97-206*

As I travel around the country, I hear again and again from parents who are concerned about what their children are being exposed to on TV. The facts support their concern. Children spend about 25 hours a week watching TV, more time each year than they spend in the classroom. And much of what they are watching is violent. By the time they complete elementary school, children have witnessed about 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence.

Parents want to protect their children from violent and other kinds of programming that they consider harmful. But the task is daunting. Nowadays there aren't just three channels to monitor, there are dozens. No parent can possibly know what's on all of them all of the time. And in this age of single parent families and families in which both parents must work to make ends meet, it simply isn't possible for parents to always be at home to monitor what their children are watching. These parents want and deserve the ability to protect their children as much as parents who are able to closely monitor their children's viewing habits.

Today's actions will give parents a modern tool to help raise their children in the modern world. Under the voluntary Industry rating system we have found acceptable, parents should be able to receive the information they need in order to determine whether an upcoming program contains sex, violence, offensive language or suggestive dialogue. When used in conjunction with the V-chip, parents will be able to prevent their children from viewing programming that they consider harmful, even when they cannot be home.

The V-chip will not relieve parents of the responsibility of determining what their children watch on TV. It will help them fulfill that responsibility. Those who urge parents to simply turn off the shows they do not want their children to see should welcome the V-chip. The V-chip is essentially a remote control device with a longer range. It allows parents to "turn off" programs that they believe are harmful to their children while they are at work, at a PTA meeting, or at a Saturday night movie. It will not be a substitute for parents; it will help parents do their jobs.

I commend the Industry for developing an Industry-wide consensus on its voluntary ratings proposal. I also commend the Industry for its willingness to broaden this consensus by addressing some of the concerns that the public raised regarding its initial proposal. I note that there are still some entities, such as NBC and BET, whose decision not to participate in the current ratings system will make it more difficult for parents to program the V-chip using the Industry proposal. I am especially concerned that many parents might not realize that

NBC -- one of the major networks with some of the highest-rated programming on television -- does not apply content-based indicators. Such a parent, for example, may attempt to block violent programming using the "v" content-based indicator without realizing that they may also have to select an entire age-based category in order to block violent shows on NBC. Once a parent selects an entire age-based category, however, he or she loses the ability to establish different age-based categories for different types of content (e.g., the ability to restrict violence to a TV-PG level while permitting sexual content up to a TV-14 level). In this way, a parent who attempts to compensate for the NBC approach by blocking out an entire age-based category may be unable to take full advantage of the Industry system. As parents begin using the V-chip, I am hopeful that all video programming distributors will perceive the public interest in making the V-chip a more effective and easy-to-use tool for parents to block programming that they deem harmful to their children.